

10 Practical Things You Can Do to Infuse Project Teams with Passion

When Setting Up Your Team

1. **Think Difference and Leveraging Talents:** Make sure your team is diverse in its thinking. Ideally, you don't want easy consensus. You want people offering different points of view, talents, and approaches. The more diversity the more the potential for new ideas regarding approaches, communications, execution, etc. Research proves that diverse teams produce higher-quality results.
 - A driver of passion is seeing your talent valued and applied in ways that have impact.
2. **Work Your Fringes:** To connect to more diverse people and parts of the organization or sector or community, extend the reach of your network by making a point to reach out at least once per month to make a new contact or strengthen an existing relationship by offering support on a task/project.
 - A key driver of meaning for many people is relationship-building. Continuing to nurture relationships and create for yourself and others a community at work functions as a powerful driver.
3. **Give First:** When establishing a new contact or strengthening an existing one, always make an offering. Research has often demonstrated that when we offer to help, provide information, share something of mutual interest, etc. it builds trust and opens the possibility for reciprocity. You don't give to expect something in return; it simply means that people will naturally want to offer something back to you.
 - Helping people is one of the most commonly selected drivers of passion at work. Interestingly, those who help, often discover they receive support in return, which helps them with their own progress drivers. A true win-win!



When Meeting as a Team

4. **Clarity of Purpose:** Invest time to establish a very clear purpose, a SMART goal and desired outcomes. This establishes the container which allows people to take action and make easier decisions. Also, outline all the non-negotiables like time lines, budgets, any standards; as well as your expectations for how the group will work (e.g., rules of

engagement, such as communication requirements). Also talk briefly about why each person has been invited to participate and what value they bring both hard and soft skills. Often we skip these elements as we assume everyone knows but articulating them empowers the group in surprising ways.

- People want to participate in purposeful activities and know the boundaries, so they can focus their energy on getting it done! Like in sports, knowing the goal and the rules, allows people to use their talents on the field! In this way you connect meaning, action and progress.
5. **Structure Discussions:** The main point is to make sure everyone's voice is heard and everyone is participating. This is how you leverage the diversity around the table and ensure Group Think doesn't occur. Focus on parallel thinking: getting people to all focus on building up the idea, then all focus on assessing its risks, then all focus on how to move forward, etc.
- When people feel valued and appreciated, they are much more willing to give of themselves and offer their best. It connects people to personal meaning and supports progress.
6. **Suspend Quick Judgments:** Think "Yes, and..." in meetings, before "blocking" an idea. Ask more questions to build up the idea (i.e., give it a chance) before commenting why the solution is problematic. You don't want people suppressing ideas as this compromises the best end results, when you have the right people at the table.
- When you don't accept someone's offering (i.e., their idea) this becomes anti-progress for them. By building on all ideas, you keep the feeling of forward movement and progress, as well as the spirit of appreciation at the table. Both are key to engaging your team.
7. **Share Leadership:** Allow others on the team to lead some of the meetings if the goal of the meeting falls within their strengths/expertise. You can continue to act as a facilitator but allow them to host the conversation. It will definitely strengthen engagement as well as accountability.
- Giving up control can be a very hard thing to do but it demonstrates how much you trust another person and allows them to use their skills and talents in meaningful ways.

Following Up

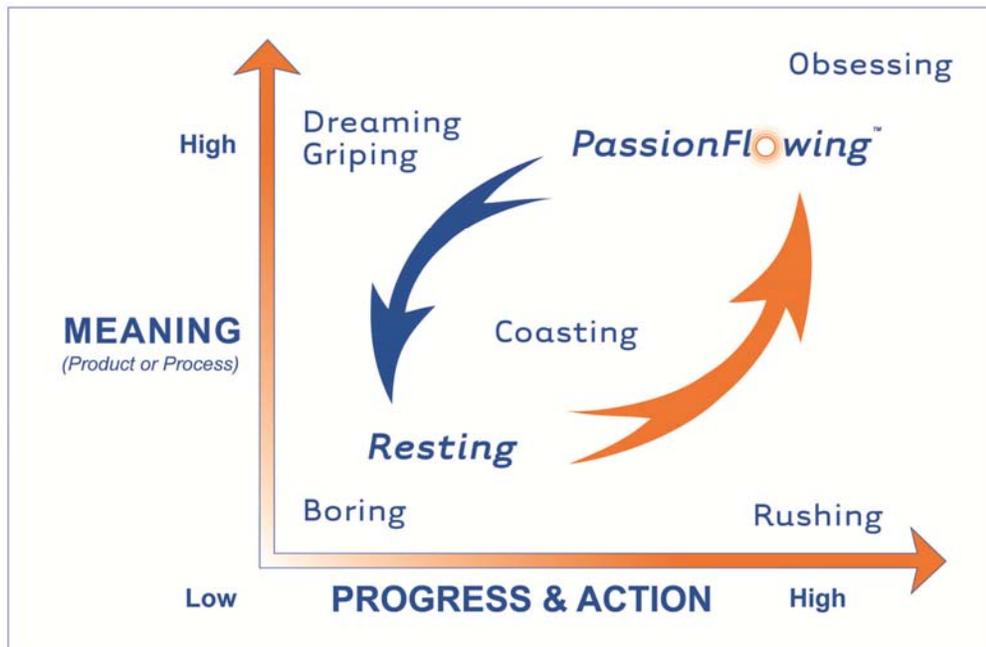
8. **Share Decisions Quickly:** Send a quick note out to all the team outlining all key decisions. The detail can follow later. The key here is to keep the momentum going through prompt communications. For complex assignments, create a communication center by using a vacant office or meeting room. Clear and current communication is a key tool for almost all agile teams.
 - Communication is often our lowest rated driver of passion; however, clients continually tell us it is the most important. Don't take short cuts here. Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.
9. **Communicate to Stakeholders:** Assess your environment and always ask yourself "Who else needs to know?" Often agile teams isolate themselves and forget about managing stakeholders. Also think about connecting the dots between your work and the work of other teams, even if it is not required. It adds tremendous value to an organization, when you can bring together different moving parts.
 - When people go beyond the minimum requirements and add value, without looking for an ROI (return on investment), people often say they feel aligned to their values and see they are contributing in a way that adds greater impact -- both of which create more passion.
10. **Don't Control the Process or Mediate:** Let people self-organize around the goal and minimum requirements. Rather than worrying about a particular way of doing something, focus on the result and let people find their own way there. Also, if a conflict emerges, coach people to deal with it openly and directly. Don't become a "middleman." Keep accountability where it belongs rather than rescuing the situation.
 - Ability to make your own decisions and ability to work in creative ways are both key drivers of passion at work. Don't become an obstacle to someone else's passion by micro-managing. Set up the rules of play and keep reminding people of the goal, and then get out of the way! Be supportive but not controlling.

Bonus Tip: Celebrate upon completion of key milestones or the end of the project. Our research tells us people neglect this phase of work to their detriment! Celebration feeds both meaning as it signals the goal is worth celebrating and progress as it marks significant accomplishments or the overall achievement.

Team Dynamics: Try this activity with Your Team

To open up an interesting conversation with your team and to check-in on each person's PassionFlow as well as the overall team's PassionFlow, try the following activity:

1. Draw our PassionWorks™ Model on a flipchart.



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2. Next, ask each person to think about what phase they think the team is in, predominantly. What is the primary phase at play?
3. Once everyone has made their selection, ask each person to walk up to the flipchart and place a dot next to the phase they think is currently dominant for the team. Don't ask for any explanation. Each person in turn walks to the chart and places their dot.
4. Once all the dots are placed, as the facilitator, ask the following questions: What do you notice? Where are the similarities? Where are the differences? Does anything surprise you?
5. Now that observations have been made, invite people to ask why: Why do you think we have this result? What is driving people's perceptions and experiences of our team's PassionFlow (PF)? **Note:** As the facilitator, you are eliciting people's views. Don't correct or debate. Just accept them as pieces of the puzzle. Your job is to help create an overall picture of reality. Once you have this, you can look at actions to take to address the current state.

6. Once the team view is clear, check-in on personal impact. Ask: How is this situation influencing your own personal PassionFlow? Hear from each person.
7. Depending on the results, you will need to ask one of the two following questions: 1. If PF is not dominant, ask: How do we move the team, and each team member, from a non-PF phase phase to a PassionFlow phase? 2. If PF is dominant, ask: How do we sustain/increase our own and our team’s PassionFlow?
8. Also have people as themselves the same questions.
9. Finally, create an action plan using a simple template as per below. Ask: what can we do as a team? What can we do as individuals? How can we support each other?

What should we START doing?	What should we KEEP doing?	What should we STOP doing?

Note: People can use the same template for their own personal action plan.

10. Follow-up at your next team meeting to monitor progress on agreed upon actions!

Passion Quotations:

"This is a team effort. If you can't put people up, please don't put them down."

– **NASA slogan**

"Passion. Creativity. Commitment. Those are the qualities that companies need most if they want to win in the new world of business. Those are also the qualities that are lacking in most companies."

– **Jim Stuart from Teamworks**

Research: Recent Gallup Poll based on 116 countries:

<http://gmj.gallup.com/content/149405/Employees-Worldwide-Common.aspx?ref=more>

Region	Approximate % of Engaged Employees
North America	25%
Latin America	Just under 25%
Australia/New Zealand	Just under 20%
Western Europe	18%
Middle East/Africa	12-15%
Southeast Asia	Slightly above 10%
Eastern Europe	8-10%
India	8%
China	1%